(b) whether it is also a fact that the presence of this society on the auction plateforms, helped to stabilise the market; and

(c) if so, what steps are being to liquidate the stocks?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED): (a) According to the returns submitted to the Tobacco Board by the Andhra Pradesh Tobacco Growers Cooperative Union, Ongole, as on 30.6.92 they were holding stocks of 837.65 tonnes of tobacco purchased from 1992 auctions, and they had not sold any stock during the period January-June, 1992.

(b) and (c) Auction prices are dependent upon demand and supply. The purchases made by the Union were small in quantity in comparision to the overall auctions of 132.75 million kg. However, the limited quantities purchased by the Union would have helped to stabilise prices to a marginal extent. The interest of the Union for selling their tobacco has been conveyed to the Russian authorities.

Commitment of English merchants to purchase FCV tobacco

4191. DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) what was the commitment of English merchants to purchase FCV tobacco during current year;

(b) the quantity of tobacco actually contracted and what is the quantity shipped, so far; and

(c) what steps have been taken to ensure that such commitment is fulfilled?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED): (a) The U.K. merchants had given a collective estimate of export requirements of 63,000 tonnes in Green Weight (packed weight 44,000 tonnes).

(b) According to the contracts filed with the Tobacco Board, the contracted quantity is amounting to 16,500 tonnes (green weight 23500 tonnes) Against the above contracted quantities, shipment of 16,600 tonnes (15,200 tonnes green weight) has been completed.

(c) The Tobacco Board convened a meeting of the overseas merchants and requested them to import tobacco as per the estimates of requirements given by them.

India's Trade Deficit

4192. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA): Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the despite trade reforms and liberalisation, country's trade deficit has risen substantially;

(b) if so, what is the trade deficit in terms of dollars during April-May 1992 as against the corresponding period in 1990-91, India's exports in dollars terms during April-May, 1992 and India's imports in dollars during April-May, 1992 as compared to imports in April-May 1991;

(c) what are the major items of exports which have declined stating the reasons therefor; and

(d) the manner in which Government propose to bridge the trade deficit?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED): (a) and (b) India's trade deficit in 1991-92 was dollar 1.55 billion as against 5.9 billion in 1990-91. This was the lowest deficit recorded in the last decade.

According to the provisional estimates, India's trade deficit amounted to US dollars 945 million during April-May, 1992, as compared to US dollar 643 million during the corresponding period of April-May 1990. India's exports amounted to US dollar 2667 million during April-May